



Invocation

Shalom to you now, shalom, my friends.
May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.
In all your living and through your loving,
Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.

Opening Prayer

P: And Mary said:
"My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me—
holy is his name. Luke 1:46-49

Dear Lord, we come together to give you honour and praise. We ask that you help us to draw close to you.

Help us to embrace one another, our similarities, our differences, our concerns and our joys. We long for your touch on our lives, that we might be your hands and feet to the world. Inspire our hearts, heal our wounds, bring your peace into our worries and your hope into our disappointments.
Amen.

Opening Hymn

Grace! 'tis a charming sound,
Harmonious to the ear;
Heav'n with the echo shall resound,
And all the earth shall hear.

*Saved by grace alone;
This is all my plea
Jesus died for all mankind,
And Jesus died for me,*

Grace taught my wandering feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour I meet
While pressing on to God.

Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes o'erflow;
'Tis grace which kept me to this day,
And will not let me go.

Oh, let that grace inspire
My soul with strength divine;
May all my powers to Thee aspire,
And all my days be Thine.

Lyrics: Philip Doddridge (1702-1751);
Music: Ira David Sankey (1840-1908)

Kauma

P. †Glory be to the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

C. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

P. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

C. Blessed is He that has come and is to come again in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

P. Holy art thou, O God.

C. Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.

P. Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.

C. O Lord, the Messiah who was crucified for us † have mercy on us. **(To be repeated thrice)**

P. O Lord, have mercy on us.

C. O Lord, have mercy on us and bless us.

P. O Lord, accept our prayers and worship and have mercy on us.

C. Glory be to you, O God.

P. Glory be to you, O Creator.

C. Glory be to you, O King the Messiah; who has mercy on us sinners. Bless us, O Lord.

(Let us sing together the prayer that Jesus taught us)

**All: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is done in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, Forever. Amen.

(Cong. to be seated)

Lesson 1 Numbers 27:1-11

Lesson 2 Acts 16:11-15

L: Meditation - A Rare Bond of Love

Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.....May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me. Ruth 1:16-17

Ruth and Naomi were unlike friends, a generation apart, one young and strong, the other past middle age. Stranger still, one was the other's mother-in-law and came from a completely different religious and ethnic background. Who would have put them together?

They had lost everything when their husbands died. With no man to rely on, their lives were at risk in those rough times. No one else would come to their defense: they had only each other.

The Woman's Initiative

The book of Ruth is not "two women against the world." Rather, it shows the women taking initiative to find, by God's help, a man who would care for them.

A woman's initiative rarely gets so direct as in Ruth. At her mother-in-law's direction Ruth located where Boaz, a relative, was camping out. She waited until dark, then crept to his feet and lay down. When Boaz woke and found her, he didn't have to be told what was on her mind. She wanted him for a husband. Flattered, he didn't let another sun set before making legal arrangements for marriage.

God's Invisible Presence

Behind the eloquent story of Ruth looms an invisible helper – God. He didn't intervene in the events, so far as the story tells. But nobody in Ruth doubted that life proceeded under God's direction. It was the Lord by whom Ruth swore when declaring her love to Naomi (1:17), and the Lord whom Naomi credited for bringing Ruth to Boaz's field (2:20). God's law brought Boaz and Ruth into marriage. Finally, the Lord gave them a son in whom mother, father and "grandmother" found deep satisfaction.

The last verses of Ruth show, furthermore, that God's plan extended beyond Ruth and Naomi's personal problems. Ruth was a member of the despised Moabites – enemies of Israel. Yet God not only accepted her into his family, but also used her to produce Israel's greatest king. Ruth's great grandson turned out to be David. To anyone who thought that God's love was for the Jews only, Ruth's life made a striking contradiction.

Hymn

God, we praise you for the women
who have taught us to be strong,
who have held us, who have raised us
with a prayer and with a song.

Sarah laughed to hear the promise--
God would bless her with a son;
Sarah laughed and Sarah doubted
till she saw what God had done.

Pharaoh's daughter, like a mother,

lifted Moses from a pool,
brought him safely to the palace
where a slave would go to school.

As her life drew on toward evening,
after she had raised her own,
Lois held her baby grandson,
told him of God's love made known.

Mary watched the killing madness
as her son died on the cross;
she who knew the joy of childbirth
now was torn by bitter loss.

Daniel Charles Damon Words © 2011 Hope Publishing Company

Women in the Bible who were Changemakers

Sarah

Sarah demonstrated faith and obedience while believing God's promises. She left her comfortable and familiar surroundings to launch her journey with God.

Genesis 12 – 23

Five Daughters of Zelophehad

These girls- Mahlah, Noa, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah stood fearless and firm and as a result reformed the culture of their day. Because they spoke up, they reversed precedents and claimed possession of their father's inheritance.

Numbers 27:1-11

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene was delivered from a life of demonic oppression and experienced the resurrected power of Christ. As a result she was one of the first to announce the risen Christ.

Mark 15 – 16

Hannah

Hannah's fervent prayer and vow teaches us that consistent faithfulness and persistent prayer gets God's attention. She believed in God for a son and He multiplied her faith by giving her many children.

1 Samuel 1, 2:1-11

The Samaritan Woman

The woman at the well became one of the first mass evangelists for Jesus Christ. She was able to confront her past truthfully and transform into a motivating mouthpiece for the Lord.

John 4:1-26

Esther

Esther modeled bravery and courage when she risked her life to save the lives of her people. She teaches us that we must break intimidation and use our influence to bring glory to God.

Esther 1 – 10

Jehosheba

Jehosheba, daughter of King Joram gripped by the power of motherly instinct, fled danger in order to protect her nephew from death and helped to preserve the future of Israel.

2 Kings 11

Deborah

Prophet and judge to Israel, Deborah was known for her wisdom, courage and compassionate zeal for justice.

Judges 4 – 5

Miriam

Moses' sister Miriam displays remarkable intelligence and confidence. She not only helped to save her brother's life but also helped set Israel's deliverance in motion.

Exodus 2:1-10, 15:1-21; Numbers 12

Achsah, daughter of Caleb

Achsah, stepped out on faith and claimed additional blessing for her family because she was bold enough to ask for more. Just like our heavenly Father is ready and willing to bless us, we must also go to Him with this same faith.

Judges 1:9-15

Daughters of Phillip the Evangelist

These four single young women had the gift of prophecy and their ministry is mentioned in the Book of Acts. They embodied boldness, courage and a willingness to step out for the Lord no matter what season of life.

Acts 21:8-9

Lois

Lois was the grandmother of Timothy. Born into the Jewish faith, she and her daughter Eunice accepted Christianity.

She is mentioned in 2 Timothy 1:5, where Paul tells Timothy, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."

Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Mary, surrendered her life and her reputation to the purposes of God. Her submission shows us that when we consecrate our life to the Lord, He can do amazing things.

Matthew 1:16, 18-25; Luke 1:26-56, 2:1-7

<http://www.beliefnet.com/ilovejesus/features/22-fearless-women-in-the-bible.aspx?p=2>

Early

It's an early day, starts while it's still dark
She stretches and drags her sleepy head
She's got to take all the children to the park.
But first, have to drag them all out of bed.
She's in charge of them, this early little lark.

She's running around and never turning sore,
These last few years have been hard and full.
Washing and cleaning and cooking and more
Lunch bags, office packs and children to school
Car cleaned, house swabbed and all on the go.

Into an envelope she packs her small wages
And thinks of good times and those at home.
Then drops it into the post with little kisses.

A tiny tear spent for that moment alone.
A little heart broken for a home she misses.

And she's back at work, no more time given
As sadness and thought won't pay labour.
She works right through, from five to eleven
A home-maker, cleaner, adviser, caretaker
This little housemaid, she's only about eleven.
Dann Thomas

Let us remember the many children, especially little girls working, when they should be either studying or out playing.

Cong. to stand

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

P: Dear Lord,

You blessed us and bestowed us the responsibility to be the custodians of your creation;
but we failed to work as partners and have treated one another as less than who you created us to be.
Today we pray for women who grieve due to ill treatment, disrespect and harassment.

In silent prayer and reflection let us uphold the women who are invisible, silenced, and forgotten.

*SILENT PRAYER

P: Holy God, we ask for your forgiveness.

C: We remained silent and did not speak up for the suffering women who cannot speak for themselves. We have not stood up against discrimination, violence and injustice against women. We confess that we have sinned against you in thoughts, words and deeds, and have failed to build a community where everyone can experience life in abundance. Transform us to restore and reconcile our relationships to ourselves, with each other and with you so that we reflect your love, peace and justice.
Amen

Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson
Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Intercessory Prayers

L: Transforming God,

You turned the Samaritan women from the excluded 'other', to become a bearer of the gospel of peace, putting in her mouth the song of testimony. Grant us that same insight and courage, that we too may recognise our place in the gospel story, and live it in our lives.

We give thanks, for women across the world whose leadership, resilience and resourcefulness in raising families, resisting despair and embracing new livelihoods has empowered them to be the change in their communities.

C: To be sung

All the way my Savior leads me;
What have I to ask beside?
Can I doubt His tender mercy,
Who through life has been my Guide?
Heav'nly peace, divinest comfort,
Here by faith in Him to dwell!
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well,
For I know, whate'er befall me,
Jesus doeth all things well.

L: Heavenly father

Comfort all women who suffer from the pain and loss of war. Comfort all women who struggle in the darkness of poverty and loneliness. May we stand with them in light to acknowledge their suffering and strive to remove the burdens of shame or embarrassment.

We pray for all women who live in fear of their husbands, fathers and forces that control their lives. Help them to be empowered to be their true selves through your everlasting love and faith.

Lead us to see the strength and goodness in all women and men. Transform our hearts to celebrate the love and grace of all people.

C: All the way my Savior leads me,
Cheers each winding path I tread,
Gives me grace for every trial,
Feeds me with the living bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
And my soul athirst may be,
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! a spring of joy I see,
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo! a spring of joy I see.

L: We pray for the many activities of our Church Sevika Sangham- the cottage prayers, mission trips, breakfast sales, workshops, cooking and handicraft classes, visits to the homes of the sick and the aged, and their many other projects that contribute to the Church missions.

We pray especially for the hostel in Galilean Center for the less privileged and physically challenged women of society. We pray for the plans to build a better residence for these hostel mates. We pray almighty God to give the Sevika Sangham the strength and resources to complete this project soon. Lead them as a friend, dear Lord, and continue to guide them in their wonderful Ministry to bring in change for a better world.

C: All the way my Savior leads me;
Oh, the fullness of His grace!
Perfect rest to me is promised
In my Father's blest embrace.
When my spirit, clothed immortal,

Wings its flight to realms of day,
This my song through endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way,
This my song through endless ages:
Jesus led me all the way.

Lyrics: Fanny Jane Crosby (1820-1915) Music: Robert Lowry (1826-1899)

Gospel Reading

P: †Peace be with you all.

C: May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

P: The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world as recorded by John 4:23-30

C: Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent him for our Salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

P: In the days of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Word of life, God incarnate of the blessed Virgin Mary, it happened in this way.

C: So we believe and affirm.

(After reading the Gospel, the priest says, †'Peace be with you all')

C: We thank you, Lord, that you have given us your gospel which is indeed the light of the world, that we may be drawn closer to you through the living words from your gospel which we have now heard.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all world; Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified also for us in the days of Pontius Pilate; suffered and died and was buried. The third day He rose again, by His Father's holy will, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead and of His kingdom there will be no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets and the apostles. We believe in one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the new life of the world to come. Amen.

(Cong. to be seated)

Birthday, Wedding Anniversary & Thanksgiving

God of the women who answered your call,
Trusting your promises, giving their all,
Women like Sarah and Hannah and Ruth
Give us their courage to live in your truth.

God of the women who walked Jesus' Way,
Giving their resources, learning to pray,

Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and more
May we give freely as they did before.

God of the women long put to the test,
Left out of stories, forgotten, oppressed,
Quietly asking: "Who smiled at my birth?"
In Jesus' dying you show us our worth.

God of the women who ran from the tomb,
Prayed with the others in that upper room,
Then felt your Spirit on Pentecost Day
May we so gladly proclaim you today.

O God of Phoebe and ministers all,
May we be joyful in answering your call.
Give us the strength of your Spirit so near
That we may share in your ministry here.

Tune: Traditional Irish melody ("Be Thou My Vision")
Text: Copyright © 1998 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

Offertory Hymn

When Mary poured a rich perfume on Jesus' weary feet,
Her caring filled that humble room; the fragrance there was sweet.
But full of anger, Judas said, "We could have used this more!
Why was her gift not sold instead and given to the poor?"

The Lord replied, "Leave her alone! She bought it for this day.
This caring love that she has shown is faithful to God's way.
The poor will always be with you, but you will not have me."
He blessed her and he thanked her, too, for giving lavishly.

O Christ, what can your people bring to show you thanks and love?
You need no fragrant offering; for now you reign above.
Since there will never cease to be the poor throughout the land,
May we, your church, serve faithfully by offering them our hand.

Tune: *Gesangbuch der Herzoglich Wirtembergischen Katholischen Hofkapelle*, 1784
("I Sing the Mighty Power of God");
Text: Copyright © 2001 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

MESSAGE

Closing prayer

P: Lord, give us the courage,
To face each passing day;
Shine Your light upon our path,

To help us see the way.

C: We thank You for all the Women
And their sacrifices so many
To give us each a better world
Of hope, love and joy aplenty. *

Pour in us Your wisdom,
And grace so we may stand;
Then let Your strength become our own,
As we hold on to Your hand.

Shine in us Your beauty,
A light for all to see;
Where there is hope, where there is joy,
Is where the Father lives in me.

Allison Chambers Coxsey 1998

Closing Prayer & Benediction

A woman of faith knows that nothing is too hard for God,
And has the power to tell her troubles away.
A woman of faith knows that God will lead her to be the change
And knows that God will carry her every step of the way.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Amen

Doxology and Kiss of Peace

She only touched the hem of His garment
As to His side she stole,
Amid the crowd that gathered around Him;
And straightway she was whole.

Oh, touch the hem of His garment,
And thou, too, shalt be free!
His healing pow'r this very hour
Shall give new life to thee!

She came in fear and trembling before Him,
She knew her Lord had come,
She felt that from Him virtue had healed her,
The mighty deed was done.

He turned with "Daughter, be of good comfort,
Thy faith hath made thee whole";
And peace that passeth all understanding
With gladness filled her soul.

Lyrics: George Frederick Root (1820-1895)

Music: George Frederick Root (1820-1895)

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When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us."

- Helen Keller

The question isn't who's going to let me; it's who is going to stop me."

- Ayn Rand

"If you look at what you have in life, you'll always have more. If you look at what you don't have in life, you'll never have enough."

- Oprah Winfrey

"A man's got to do what a man's got to do. A woman must do what he can't."

- Rhonda Hansome

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.

~ Maya Angelou

Primrose Mar Thoma Church Choir- September 2017